ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE IN AFGHANISTAN: NATURE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS (2014-2019)

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1 INTRODUCTION

Good governance and administrative reform cannot be discussed without the other since both compel one to go to the roots of society and the human person. Administrative reform and good governance have gained significant attention worldwide, especially in the last two decades. The state formation required capable and efficient administration to manage physical boundaries, protect the country from domestic and external violence, extract public resources, maintain laws and order, and deliver public service to its people. Today, citizens demand more competent and knowledge-based governments that can provide efficient and effective service, and citizens increasingly insist on similar performance standards in government and business; hence, governments have to adopt significant changes[1]. Many analysts argue that administrative reform has been a recurrent activity of governments around the world, emphasized by the severity of the issues faced by less-developed nations. Most of these nations have a colonial legacy and a significant dependency on the West; hence, their administrative systems suffer profound deficiencies. However, not all developing countries can be categorized in this way. Indeed, many developing countries went through significant transformations after their independence[2]. Some have achieved considerable development with marked effectiveness, while others have remained dependent on the West's assistance. At the present time, nations worldwide struggle for better circumstances through good governance and responsible civil service for effective and efficient service delivery.

Today, International Agencies such as the World Bank**,** World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund insist that developing nations adopt institutionalizing reform in their public sectors to promote reasonable governance practices. In the contemporary world, governments of developed and underdeveloped countries engage in extensive administrative reforms to deliver good governance and improve living conditions among citizens everywhere.

[1]Pan Suk Kim. (2000), Administrative Reform in the Korean Central Government: A Case Study of the Dae Jung Kim Administration, *Public Performance & Management Review,* 24(2), 145-160.https://www.jstor.org/stable/3381265

[2]Ali Farazmand. (2002), Administrative Reform in Developing Nations, Praeger Publishers, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881 An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc. United States of America,1-40.

Moreover, in the pro-development discourse, administrative reforms and good governance are interlocking objectives in emerging societies, particularly Afghanistan. In consideration of that administrative reform and good governance are crucial issues, and they can help Afghanistan to overcome its challenges[3].

After the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001, Afghanistan's government had certain kinds of administrative reforms in the economic, political, legal, and educational sectors. Yet, very little has changed over the last two decades. Apart from these, the government also pledged to the people and its International Allies (IA) to institute significant reform initiatives to make its public service delivery and administration more efficient, effective, and transparent. Still, those aspirations and promises have never become a reality because of maladministration, systematic corruption, and insecurity issues. Moreover, many were held responsible for the post-Taliban government, which will be discussed in chapter four. As a matter of course, this research project is set to assess the issues and prospects of administrative reforms and good governance in post-9/11 Afghanistan in general and under a new government called Afghanistan's National Unity Government (ANUG) in particular.

2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Good governance plays a vital role in socio-economic and political development in developing countries. Numerous evidence shows that accountable, responsive, efficient, and effective governments contribute to achieving common socio-economic development and renewal of developing country's states. Administrative reform is common parlance in public administration, and its practice has dominated government activities cross-nationally since the ancient era[4]. Public sectors must conduct administrative reform responsive to innovation and stakeholders' demands for better services. A system of governance looks fair and good when it is transparent, accountable, legitimate, operates by the rule of law, is efficient and effective in using

[3] Pan Suk Kim Kim, 2007, "Emerging Challenges to the Public Capacity in the Era of Evolving Public Administration: Toward Collaborative Public Management," *Asian Journal of Political Science,* 15(3). 13-25.

[4] Ali Farazmand (1999) Administrative reform in global perspectives: a symposium, International Journal of Public Administration, 22:6, 805-813, DOI: 10.1080/01900699908525405

public resources, is responsive to the basic needs and demands of the people, and ensures equality and equality. The former General Secretary of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, stated that "good governance is an effective device to eradicate poverty and ensure development[5]." However, the success of administrative reform initiatives and good governance practices depends on each country's starting point– what institutional arrangements exist at the outset and who the people implementing reforms within the existing institutional framework are. In other words, good or bad governance depends on the management method of a country's social and economic resources. Unfortunately, Afghanistan is a victim of systematic corruption, nepotism, bad governance, political instability, a cyclical legitimacy crisis, disregard for the rule of law, and abuse of political and administrative electoral processes. Importantly, to make progress from bad governance to good governance, from weak to strong development performance public sector, Afghanistan has adhered to the core fundamentals of good governance and sweeps institutional reforms, without which socio-economic progress and political development will continue to be a big illusion. However, many studies have been carried out on good governance in India, Iran, China, Bangladesh, Turkey, and other developing nations; no holistic approach has yet been employed to address the issues of administrative reform and good governance since most of the studies have so far been undertaken either with narrow political views or with limited economic perspectives in Afghanistan. In addition to this, this thesis visits countries with successful and practical experiences of administrative reforms and good governance practices was arranged.

Last but not least, President Ashraf Ghani's Administration has definitively turned on the constitutional instability that characterized the country's worst place on the earth between 2014 to 2019. So, this thesis attempted to address related challenges faced and look into the present situation of accountability, transparency, and the rule of law and how they have impacted the administrative reform and quality of good governance for people in Afghanistan. Moreover, it also guides reform implementers, policy-makers, and practitioners toward purposeful reform outcomes and promoting good governance practices in Afghanistan.

[5] KOFI A. ANNAN. (March 2004-December 2006). "Good governance perhaps the single and most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development". United Nations Development Program- supporting the achievement of millilumen development goals in Asia and the Pacific(PHASE II): Retrieved from mailto:https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Governance.pdf

3 HYPOTHESIS

The hypothetic belief of this thesis states that the political leaders of Afghanistan and governing elites are naturally responsible for the problems of acute poverty in their country as well as the issues regarding administrative reform and good governance implementation. In addition, corruption and political elites are believed to cause good governance failures in Afghanistan. In this section, there will be analyzed governmental corruption considering the effects of administrative reforms and good governance.

This Ph.D. thesis concentrates on the following central hypothesis:

1. President Ashraf Ghani's Administration launch various packages of administrative reforms to enhance good governance in Afghanistan,
2. President Ashraf Ghani's Administration developed multiple strategies to curb systematic corruption and deliver public service in Afghanistan,
3. President Ashraf Ghani's Administration fully utilizes the funds received from the International Monetary Agencies (IMA) and donor countries to restore good governance practices in Afghanistan.

4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this thesis is to assess the status of administrative reform and identify the major issues and challenges of good governance in post-9/11, Afghanistan, in general, and President Ashraf Ghani's Administration in particular.

Specifically, this thesis is intended:

1. To assess what administrative reforms were operationalized under a new government called Afghanistan's National Unity Government(ANUG),
2. To identify the administrative reform failure and success in the context of the post-Taliban government from a broad perspective and Afghanistan's National Unity Government in particular,

3. To examine the major issues that impede (hinder) the process of building and consolidating good governance in the post-Taliban Government and Afghanistan's National Unity Government-a case study,
4. To portray the major opportunities and possible solutions for promoting good governance practices in Afghanistan.

5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

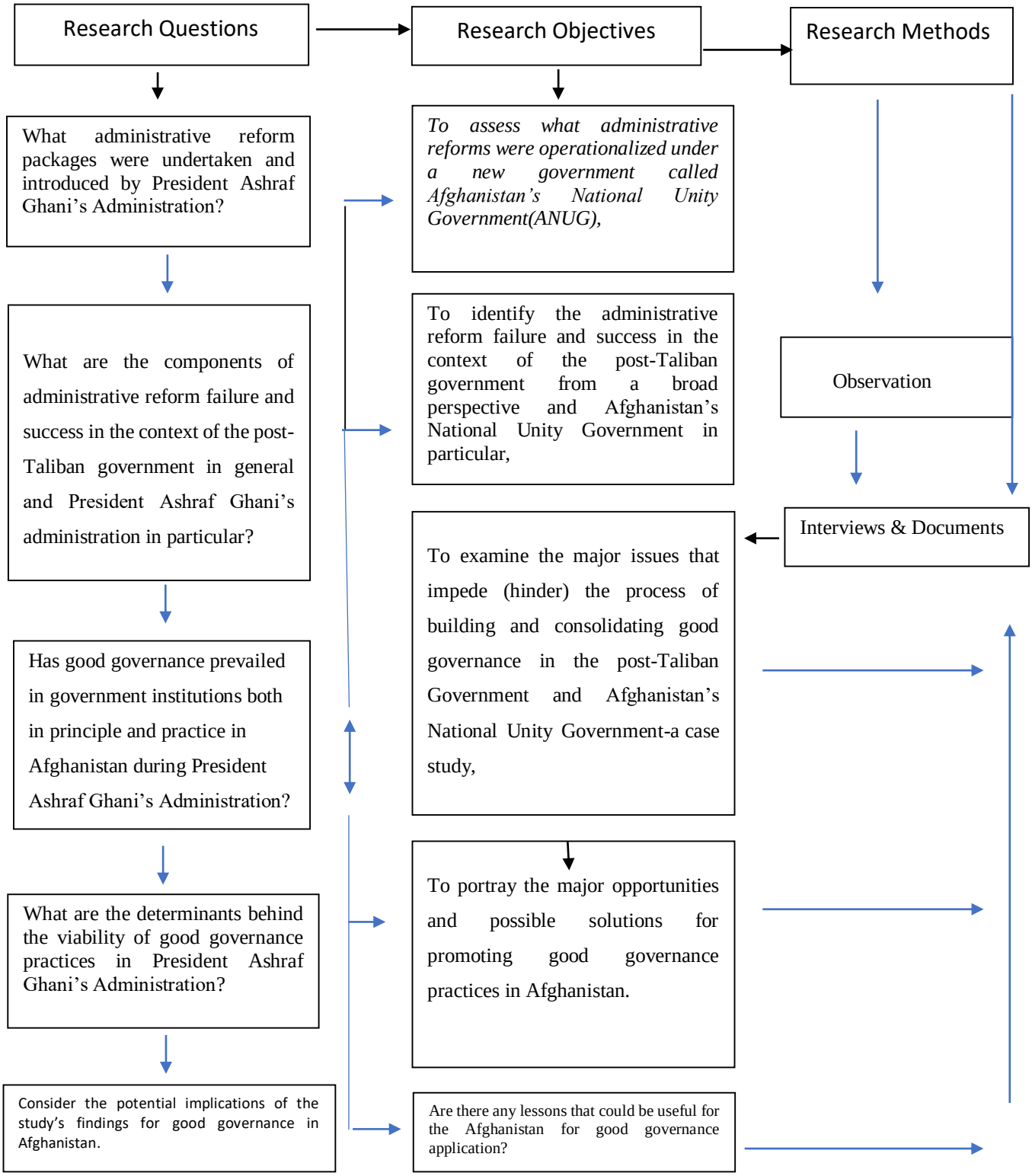
Even though Afghanistan has been one of the largest cumulative recipients of foreign aid over the past two decades, the country has remained backward in political development and socio-economic progress. Consequently, malnutrition, poor health prospect, unemployment and underdevelopment, abject poverty, rising insecurity, and political instability have been the nation's hallmarks. This thesis is designed to examine what major administrative reforms were undertaken by Afghanistan's National Unity Government. Then it seeks to explore whether the government institutions under the leadership of Mohammad Ashraf Ghani made attempts to promote good governance in theory and practice in Afghanistan.

This study, therefore, is guided by the following leading questions:

1. What administrative reform packages were undertaken and introduced by President Ashraf Ghani's Administration?
2. What are the components of administrative reform failure and success in the context of the post-Taliban government in general and President Ashraf Ghani's administration in particular?
3. Has good governance prevailed in government institutions both in principle and practice in Afghanistan during President Ashraf Ghani's Administration?
4. What are the determinants behind the viability of good governance practices in President Ashraf Ghani's Administration?
5. To what extent were President Ashraf Ghani's Administration and Donor Agencies determined to promote good governance practices?

Linking research objectives, questions, and methods

Figure (2)


Research Questions
Research Objectives
Research Methods
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Observation
Interviews & Documents
Has good governance prevailed in government institutions both in principle and practice in Afghanistan during President Ashraf Ghani's Administration?
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What are the determinants behind the viability of good governance practices in President Ashraf Ghani's Administration?
To portray the major opportunities and possible solutions for promoting good governance practices in Afghanistan.
Consider the potential implications of the study's findings for good governance in Afghanistan.
Are there any lessons that could be useful for the Afghanistan for good governance application?

In summary, figure (2) explains the various stages of the research process and the data collection method. It demonstrates that the search for the literature materials relevant to the topic followed problem identification. This pattern enabled an understanding of the research context, question design, and the subsequent selection of appropriate methods to answer the questions. As such, three methods were used: interviews being the main one and supplemented by documents and observation. The study then proceeded to data collection, analysis, and interpretations, after which the findings were evaluated and reported. Indeed, this figure was developed by the researcher.

6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The author of this thesis firmly believes that institutional reform and good governance practices are essential prerequisites to economic and political development and economic prosperity in developing countries. Responsive, effective, stable, accountable, and transparent governments are crucial in the fight against poverty and systematic corruption. However, the current issues and challenges associated with administrative reforms and good governance are unbearable due to factors such as bad governance, corruption, social injustice, economic crisis, and poor service delivery. Sad to say that Afghanistan, like many developing nations, has not struggled to alleviate poverty and improve the living condition of its people in the past two decades. The current research project on administrative reforms and good governance has an imperative place. Hence this study will be critical in many ways. First, this thesis provides the best advantage for policy-makers and administrators to formulate and settle good policies and strategies for the country's economic, social, political, cultural, and humanitarian issues to ensure good governance. Secondly, it will provide stakeholders at all levels to acknowledge the best alternatives for promoting good governance practices. Third, the finding would guide donor agencies that only good governance will create the pre-condition for a more developmental role of International Assistance. Fourthly, this research will give insight into good governance practices and the determinants behind promoting good governance. At last, this research can be used as input for those who can conduct further research on similar areas by identifying gaps pertinent to good governance in Afghanistan. Moreover, this work will be fruitful for public bureaucrats, political leaders, and donor organizations. Finally, the students of political science, economics, and, more

importantly, students of the faculty of public policy and administration could grasp the necessity and imperative of administrative reform and its impact on promoting good governance implementation in Afghanistan. Last but not least, this study can help Afghanistan to achieve accountable, responsive, transparent, efficient, and effective public sector organizations in the country.

7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study examines the "Administrative Reforms for Good Governance in Afghanistan: Nature and its Implications (2014-2019)- in Afghanistan. The study area was selected purposely for the following reasons: firstly, the study researched to assess the administrative status under President Ashraf Ghani's Administration. Secondly, this thesis examines the literature on administrative reforms and good governance in developing countries. More specifically, this thesis was guided by three major research hypotheses tested by findings and scientifically analyzed.

8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This thesis suffered from several unavoidable shortcomings, such as the lack of reliable statical and factual materials, particularly about administrative reforms and good governance in the post-Taliban era. As a result, this study's scope and quality can be improved if such material is made available. In addition, the researcher faced various challenges during the research, and some significant limitations are discussed here in brief:

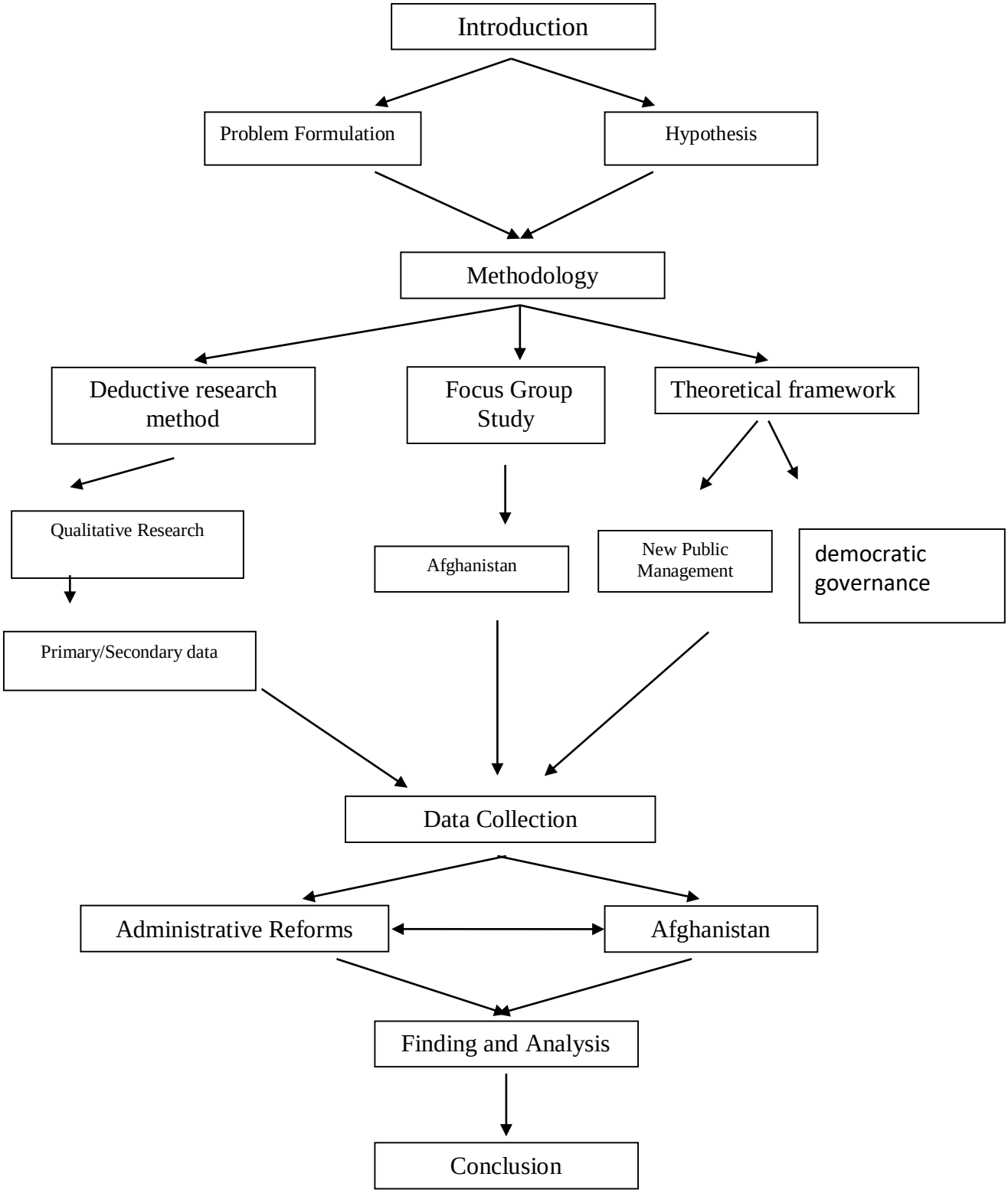
Shortage of Data: International Organizations and independent researchers have conducted various research on human rights, women empowerment, poverty, security, political development, democracy, and economic issues in the past two decades. So far, very few studies about administrative reforms and good governance have been conducted in the past two decades. The researcher faced some difficulties in gathering adequate information and reliable materials for the carrying out of this Ph.D. project. As a result, there is inadequate material regarding administrative reforms and good governance issues in Afghanistan. The major limitation encountered during the current study is the lack of well-organized secondary sources.

Sample: The size of the sample and the data collection method were limited in the study. The initial sample consisted of 30 participants, but only 17 took part. This resulted in ten participants being unable to participate due to fleeing the countries because the political regime changed and the Taliban returned to power. Security Issues: The researcher intents to go for data collection from the government apparatus and meet several experts, bureaucrats, and political elites to interview. Unfortunately, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan collapsed, and the Taliban regime captured control of Afghanistan on August 15, 2021. As a result, the political regime has changed, and the researcher cannot move to Afghanistan. However, a large portion of the data used in this study was collected between 2020-2022.

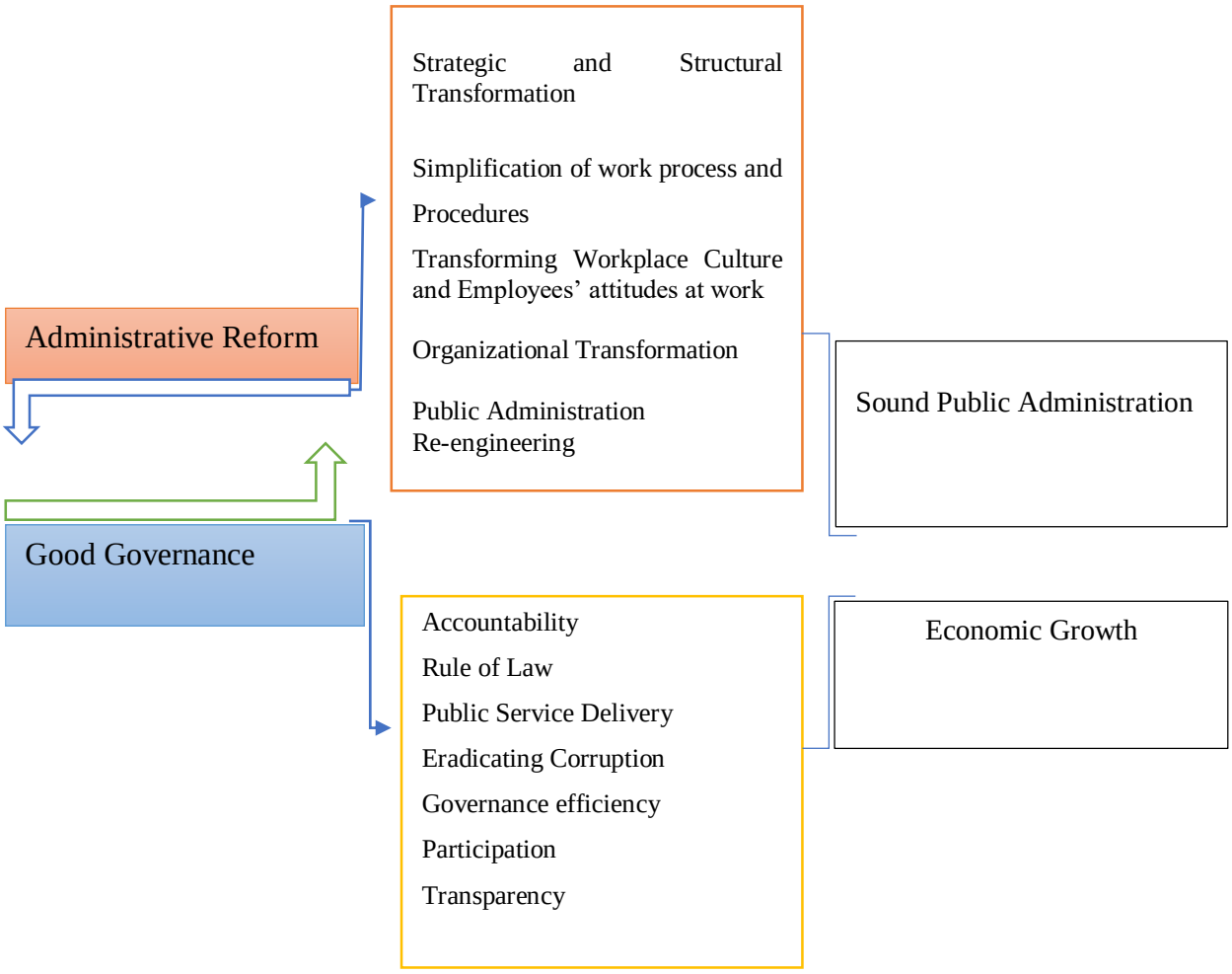
9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher has applied non-experimental, qualitative, exploratory, descriptive, and contextual approaches. The researcher in the following thesis used the following steps as below: First, a literature review and comprehensive overview of administrative reforms and good governance are carried out using the normative-analytical method. Secondly, the research analyses relevant issues that hampered administrative reform and good governance practices in the post-Taliban administration through a systematic approach focus group discussion and telephone interviews. The primary source of data was employed for data gathering. This primary source involves conducting an original investigation to obtain desired information. The primary data was sourced majorly through questionnaire administration, interviews, and personal observations. This survey method seems fitting for this study because it can explore perceptions and elicit first-hand information from respondents. It also examines real-life contexts and situations, which makes it appropriate for this study. Finally, the findings are also supported by secondary and primary data collected. Primary data was collected through telephone interviews, and secondary data was collected from concerned periodicals, daily newspapers, books, journals, and other materials—the method of data analysis is based on the descriptive method of accounting. In addition, the interviewees and respondents are university professors, and their identities are treated with absolute confidentiality. Thus, there is no list of the respondents' names added here. The interviews have been to find as close as possible to the subject and get data material as up-to-date as possible.

The following figure (2) shows the present thesis's overall structure and the researcher's figure. Figure (3) shows a framework of the research process in this thesis



10 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



This figured developed by the researcher (Figure.1)

Good governance is epitomized by open and enlighten policy making; predictable, a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of the government accountable for its action; and a strong civil society participating in the public affairs; and all behaving under rule of law. Administrative reforms provide opportunity for a re-examination of the structure, processes, techniques and management practices in use in an organization. They are designed to breathe fresh air into the system with a view to revitalizing it. Indeed, these two concepts are well described in chapter two.

11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The New Public Management is vital in operationalizing a good governance model. Good governance without new public management cannot be realized (Gruening, 2001). "Most of the countries had limited the role and scope of their government, including downsizing bureaucracy, devolution of authority, cost reduction, contracting out some functions of government, developing and designing result-oriented appraisal system, and commercialization as well as the market orientation of the governmental activities." "This is supported by effective accountability through an open reporting system. (Tolofari, 2005)" The administration is seemingly moving from rule to result in orientation from approaches to enterprise, obedience to inaction, to reward, centralization to decentralization, and administrators' duties to citizens' rights (Broucker, 2022). Due to changes in human life span, the public sector in the world's countries, especially developing nations, faces multiple challenges, such as political, economic, social, and administrative. Maladministration, nepotism, political patronage, rigid bureaucracy, and rampant corruption are standard features of traditional public administration (Lapsley, 2009). Specifically, public sectors are significantly under pressure to change their practices and operations, which can help the public sector provide efficient, effective, and transparent services. Most economic, political, and public administration scholars believe that applying New Public Management is the appropriate solution to today's public sector challenges. Polidano (2001) argues that the New Public Management approach had become a leading instrument for reforming public sector institutions (Sarker, 2004). New Public Management elements are suitable to counteract the challenges of the public sector, and those elements can ensure government efficiency and effectiveness[6]. The World Bank (WB) and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) emphasize applying NPM as an instrument of public sector reforms worldwide. The evidence shows that industrialized countries had initially applied this approach to institute reforms in their public sectors, and then it emerged in developing countries[7]. For instance, the first application of New Public Management

[6] Blunt, P. (1990). Strategies for enhancing organisational effectiveness in the Third World, *Public Administration and Development* 10(3): 299-313.

[7] Lewis B. Dzimbiri. (2008), Experiences In New Public Management In Africa: The Case Of Performance Management Systems In Botswana. *Africa Development*, *33*(4):43-58. https://doi.org/10.4314/ad.v33i4.57339

emerged in the UK under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher[8]. From the 1980s onwards, several developing countries applied the New Public Management to standardize their public sectors. In the 1990s, the Indian government introduced a structural adjustment (Policy Reform), commonly known as liberalization, privatization, and globalization, to smooth economic development and build friendly administration[9].

12. THE APPROACH OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

According to the United Nations: democratic governance moves beyond the mere procedures of democracy and the establishment of democratic institutions. It involves promoting the sustainability of democracy, which includes an enduring capacity for the separation of powers and independence of the branches of government; the exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law; the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and the transparency and accountability of a responsible civil service, functioning at both the national and local levels." (United Nations, 2014). The statements explain the main objectives of democratic governance. In regards to this, it is essential to have democratic governance in developing countries, as it creates the background for the country's successful development. In more detail, the population welfare is characterized in terms of release from hunger and includes respect for the democratic belief of governance. Long-term sustainable development is connected to fair democratic governance and human rights protection (USAID, 2012). Democratic government is a critical aspect in reducing poverty and improving human development as the political processes, regulations, policies, and implementations significantly contribute to the development. In regards to this, democratic governance has an important place in this thesis. It is necessary to introduce the reader about the main ideas of democratic governance and its importance to the development aid effectiveness before the central analytical part. It explains how the government should work, its main goals, and how it can help reduce poverty. Regarding the thesis, analyzing the democratic governance in Afghanistan could help to examine if the country has one of the most necessary tools for successful

[8] *Michael Barzelay. (2001),* The New Public Management, In The New Public Management. University of California Press, https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520925274

[9] Jorgen Dige. (2000), Explaining Economic Liberalization In India: State And Society Perspectives, *World Development, 28*(2), 265-282. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(99)00132-1

development aid. Applying this approach and the facts of Afghanistan's government activities could give necessary outcomes for the conclusion.

12 LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the last three decades, several developing nations began to adopt some elements of NPM to improve the quality of their government performance[10]. However, empirical studies on the implementation and effectiveness of NPM in developing countries are rare[11]. Despite the considerable amount of foreign aid, Afghanistan has not created any particular model to solve its administrative pathologies. The government ought to learn lessons and experiences from different nations and, more particularly, from India. This part begins with an overview of the literature on administrative reform in developing countries. Then it seeks to assess the applicability of some elements of NPM in Afghanistan's public sector. There are two primary purposes for a literature review: (a)It demonstrates the ability of the researcher to identify and understand the most relevant and essential literature in the research area. The review thus encompasses a survey of peer-reviewed articles, books, conference papers, and related theses. (b)The literature review also identifies "gaps" in the research that this study will address, thus producing a reason (or justification) for the subsequent examination.

The literature review then analyses the FCAS experience with PAR using a multiple-lens model of new institutionalism, change management theory, and the principal-agent approach. The intention is to highlight the successes, limitations, assumptions, known causes of failure, and gaps concerning PAR efforts, through reference to the theories underpinning the initial propositions at the end of chapter one. For example, according to World Bank (2008), public administration reform in Afghanistan is nothing less than rebuilding an effective state after armed conflict for more than 40 years and administrative turmoil[12]. Nasery (2019) highlights the inability of the

[10] Larbi, G A 1998. Larbi, G. A. (1998). Institutional Constraints And Capacity Issues In Decentralizing Management In Public Services, The Case Of Health In Ghana. Journal Of International Development: The Journal of the Development Studies Association, *10*(3), 377-386.

[11] Ramanie Samaratunge et.al. (2002), New Public Management: Challenge for Sri Lanka, *Asian Journal of Public Administration*, 24(1), 87-109.

[12] World Bank (2008) Afghanistan: Building an Effective State: Priorities for Public Administration Reform, World Bank, Kabul

existing reform models or conceptual theories to yield substantial progress in the civil service of conflict-affected countries. There are many reasons for this, including a general failure in the enforcement of the norms and standards introduced through reforms, institutionalized and culturally accepted corrupt practices which are exacerbated by foreign aid, and general political instability in such countries. Huque & Ferdous (2019) assert that the government of Bangladesh adopted decentralization as a strategy of administrative reform and decentralized its administrative activities with an active network of local government institutions to carry out the developmental project at the local levels. In addition, it restructured its pay scales, the cost of living, and resources available to the government. Masum (2018) argues that after independence, the Indian government invited some international experts to curb its administrative challenges and ensure reform in public sector organizations. However, all international specialists acknowledged that the Indian government needs to change its bureaucratism's behavior and professional capacity through education and training programs.

According to the BBC (2018) report, the applicant had to go through 58 administrative steps to get the job done to carry out a routine administrative process. This trend applies to both central and local administrations in Afghanistan, and some citizens even call the situation of the local government more catastrophic than the central government. Government machinery in the country is functioning poorly, and it widens the gap between government institutions and citizens in Afghanistan. In contrast, evidence from developing nations reflects that federalism brings the government to the people. For example, the federal government removes the distance between the people and bureaucracy and creates a climate of trust and close co-operation between citizens and administrative institutions.

Edward et al. (2015) indicate that community capacity building, engaging communities in program planning, management, and financial oversight has shown improved health outcomes. Despite the evidence on the effectiveness of community engagement, it became apparent that these outcomes can only be sustained in a framework of community support mechanisms, responsibility, and management accountability. In conflict and transitional contexts, additional efforts are required to build trust in public services and reinforce community institutions rather than

undermining them. The joint interface meeting facilitated transparent dialogue between the community and providers and resulted in creative and participatory problem-solving mechanisms and the mobilization of resources[13]. Hashimi & Lauth (2016) state that the lack of political will, feckless leadership, commitment to civil service reform, deficient legal and regulatory framework, and shortage of administrative experts are the main challenges to reforming public sectors in Afghanistan. Additionally, despite substantial improvement in many areas of national governance, civil service reform has been relatively slow, and considerable challenges remain. Singh (2016) points out that the interim administration under the leadership of Karzai has instituted various reform initiatives, including Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR), Public Administration Reform (PAR), and Pay and Grading (P&G) to build up a competent civil service and create sound public administration.

Satpathy (2013) indicates that good governance is one of the fundamental prerequisites for successful socio-economic development in developing countries. It can usually play an essential role in the area, including health, education, infrastructure, capital market regulation, macroeconomic stability, safety net provision, the legal system, and the creation of a good business environment.

O'Connell et al., 2012 indicate that the government and the international community have worked closely together to reconstruct Afghanistan in the past two decades. At the heart of the reconstruction, the schedule has put efforts into developing an effective state to ensure security and services to the Afghan people while protecting their rights. Public administration reform (PAR) is intended to contribute to that effort by building an effective civil service, improving governance and service delivery at the local level, and making the government accountable to the people.

Sözen (2012) states that good governance refers to the effective decision-making process and its implementation free from abuse of authority to eradicate poverty, curtain corruption, and

[13] Edward, et al,. (2015), Enhancing governance and health system accountability for people-cantered healthcare: an exploratory study of community scorecards in Afghanistan. BMC health services research, *15*(1), 1-15.

enable the government machinery to ensure economic growth and promote public service delivery to the ordinary person.

Amiry (2010) stresses that since the removal of the Taliban from power in 2001, corruption has been a prominent obstacle to administrative reform practices. As a result, donor nations have repeatedly pressed President Hamid Karzai to address issues of corruption. In turn, Mr. Ghani and Karzai have placed the blame on the members of the cabinet and the deputies in parliament.

Guanghui (2010) states that administrative reforms involve three major overlapping Stages in China. The first stage is to re-engineer public administration and decentralize administrative powers and authority rights. The second stage is to shift governmental functions to help transform from a planned economy to a market one. The final step is to change the government's administrative methods and procedures.

Reveron (2010) states that Afghanistan's former presidents are not more enthusiastic about transferring politico-administrative power and authority to sub-national government agencies. People are dissatisfied with the highly centralized public sector, losing trust and confidence in government institutions (Reveron, 2010). The President makes staff appointments in the middle to senior grades, while the provincial governor appoints junior staff to the district level. Fiscally, Afghanistan is also highly centralized. At provincial and district levels, central ministries' local arms make expenditures through national programs. No fiscal transfers as such go to sub-national levels. With 44 percent of the civil service workforce in Kabul, funds are concentrated at the center. Budgets of provincial governments are set in Kabul, and Kabul's approval is required for even minor changes. Afghan districts and provinces have no independent authority to impose taxes on the revenue side.

Suk Kim & Monem (2009) address that the government of Bangladesh embarked on various administrative reforms shortly after its independence in 1971. The government constituted 17 reform commissions to improve its public sector effectiveness, efficiency, and steadfastness. Moreover, Bangladesh's public service commission restructured and rationalized human resources across the ministries, departments, and agencies, delegated financial and administrative power to the locals and restructured the payment systems.

Gross (2009) points out that the international community has been rebuilding Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban and has made several attempts to create a stable government through good governance and human rights protection under the rule of law.

Quah (2008) stressed that Singapore's People's Action Party Government emphasized institutional and attainable reforms, meritocracy, anti-corruption measures, and competitive salaries for public servants. In addition, the government placed the most talented Singaporeans in the government machinery to behave ethically and rationally with citizens for the sake of national interests.

Chou (2007) argues that good governance cannot be realized without more comprehensive administrative reform efforts. The ultimate objective of reform is to improve staffing, compensation, and staff development to improve organizational efficiency and capacity. In addition, he acknowledges that the central feature of the reform is to replace meritocracy with political credentials, patronage, and nepotism buttressed in the pre-reform personnel system, better known as a cadre management system.

Lister (2007) stresses that establishing a capable public sector institution is critical to post-conflict state-building. An effective public service is fundamental to regulating society, managing public funds, and service delivery. In contrast, the post-Taliban government failed to create an effective, efficient, and transparent public administration.

Freeman(2007) argues that state-building has become a military target for those that resist it in Afghanistan in the past two decades. To the Taliban and other substate powers that seek to attain and govern through the same legitimacy, such activities constitute an encroachment on their political space. Terrorist or insurgent acts to suppress state involvement as a rival authority become

highly rational in this political environment, even though morally objectionable to the UN aid agencies and much of the international community[14].

Palanithurai (2005) highlights that many nations made efforts to limit the role of the state, including devolution of authority, cost reduction, downsizing the bureaucracy and contracting out some of the operative functions of the government, developing and designing result-oriented appraisal systems, commercialization as well as the market orientation of the governmental activities over the past four decades.

Hakimi et al. (2004) point out that a high degree of informality, extremely weak human resource capacities across government departments and agencies, and warlordism in the government are the main challenges of administrative reform in Afghanistan. Therefore, the government of Afghanistan introduced priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) as a framework to reform the public sector and depart from the conventional approaches to public administration reform. Sarker (2004) argues that Bangladesh's Public Service Commission (PSC) initiated various administrative reform efforts, including re-organization and rationalization of human resources, the delegation of administrative and financial powers to the local authorities, reduction of ministries, departments, and agencies, and merit-based recruitment and promotion for improving the quality and standard of public service delivery.

Brancati (2004) states that Afghanistan is viewed as a multi-ethnic, cross-cultural, and multi-religious society. One size is not fit for all. To be honest, the unitary administration system posed political and socio-economic challenges like instability, civil war, ethnic conflicts, terrorism, poverty, social injustice, violence, and bad governance over the past four decades. Hence, a centralized administration system does not fit Afghanistan to overcome its multiple challenges. The ethnic, cultural, religious, and language diversity and complexity of Afghanistan's territory

[14] Christopher Freeman (2007) Introduction: Security, Governance and State building in Afghanistan, International Peacekeeping, 14:1, 1-7, DOI: 10.1080/13533310601114228

demand a federal system of governance. Federalism is the only instrument for a plural society like Afghanistan to prevent violence and eliminate ethnic conflicts and ethnocultural personalization.

Sangita (2002) argues that developed and developing have undergone administrative reforms to promote good governance. Furthermore, he acknowledges that the success of administrative reform depends highly on the government's ability to present strategic reform based on the vision in consultation with the broader sections of society and effective communication with the stakeholders and people about the need for reform and its potential benefits.

Zafarullah & Huque (2001) point out that the political system in Bangladesh has remained fragile and stable, the economy is in disarray, and public service delivery is practically non-existent. He further stated that a good developing government is expected to find an effective solution to some of the progress's major problems and lead the country towards better circumstances.

Root et al. (2001) points out that the government of Sri Lanka had introduced various administrative reforms to modernize its public sector institutions, including re-engineering public administration structures, rationalizing human resources in the public sectors, and results-based management systems and procedures. As a result of the above reforms, public service delivery's effectiveness, efficiency, and quality were considerably improved.

Khan (1987) addresses that the government of Bangladesh underwent fundamental administrative reform and re-organization under military leadership. The main objectives of administrative reform were decentralizing authority to the grassroots level to ensure increasing popular participation in administration, achieving cost-effectiveness by lessening the number of ministries and removing unnecessary personnel from the public payroll, and providing the accountability of public servants to public representatives. However, the pace of decision-making by eliminating redundant bureaucratic layers appears to have been formulated and publicized chiefly for public consumption for short-term political gains.

Sundaram (1997) contends that the Indian government instituted administrative reform to ensure greater transparency, openness, and responsiveness to the people and changes in the

regulatory framework of government functioning. In addition, he argues that administrative reform can enhance the government's efficiency, flexibility, productivity, care, and response.

Minh Chau (1997) demonstrates that poor administration is the main factor that hinders socio-economic development in Vietnam. He also believes administrative reform is required to actualize good governance and the country's modernization. In addition, he emphasized that one common reason for the failure of administrative reform in developing countries and, more precisely, in Vietnam, is the copying of western rationality, in the form if not in substance, with insufficient attention paid to the traditional, cultural, religious, and political context of administration.

Burns (1993) points out that in the 1990s, the Chinese government introduced three significant administrative reform efforts: decentralization, organizational restructuring, and downsizing civil services to ensure economic development and good governance. Furthermore, he indicates that a lack of political will, poor administrative capacities, and bureaucratic resistance hindered administrative reform implementation. In the 1980s and 1990s, several donor nations and institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United States, proposed aid packages to developing countries (recipient countries) to bring reforms in their public institutions and good governance as a prerequisite for aid, a practice called "selectivity."

Minocha (1998) points out that administrative reform initiatives can help governments in developing nations operationalize the concept of good governance in public sector organizations. The international experience demonstrates that several countries have restructured their administrative system to fulfill the aspirations of citizens. During the last 50 years, in India, such reforms have been introduced to promote good governance in developing and developed nations.

Ray (1999) demonstrates that administrative reforms and good governance are integral to developing nations' socio-economic progress and political development debate. However, administrative reform is not an end in itself. Instead, it is a means to minimize the well-being of its citizens.

13 RESEARCH GAP

Research has been carried out about administrative reform initiatives and good governance practices in many developing countries, including India, China, Iran, Iraq, Bangladesh, Turkey, Japan, and most African countries. In contrast, several studies have not been done on administrative reforms and good governance practices in the post-Taliban government. Furthermore, Afghanistan is a developing country still faced with several challenges concerning launching administrative reforms and good governance practices. The previous studies indicate that more research is needed to provide consensus solutions to the governance crisis in Afghanistan. In addition, the present knowledge needs to be investigated to understand how this works in real organization settings. Furthermore, the government and international community have ignored the importance of reforming public sectors and promoting good governance in the past two decades. Therefore, the present study is novel to date at the Ph.D. level due to a shortage of work on administrative reforms and good governance practices.

14 KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION

Although the study was only based on qualitative information, the research can contribute to the literature on public administration and provide an understanding of local administration and development and the institutional capacity for public administration with a particular focus on Afghanistan. The research has broader implications in public administration reform for the governments in Afghanistan and countries with similar socio-economic situations, providing information on public service delivery. It also has implications for Sustainable development goals for further interaction with governments in implementing development programs and achieving development targets. Future studies could include a large sample size by following a systematic sampling process to infer results for further improvements in public service delivery in Afghanistan.

15. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The current dissertation is classified into six chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction of the thesis. The present chapter is divided into four sections. The first section offers the thesis background. The study's aims and objectives follow the section. The next part presents the statement of the problem and the research questions, the research methodology, and theoretical analysis, and a review of the literature, and the final part presents the structure of the thesis. The first chapter introduces the justification for conducting this research and its contribution.

Chapter two begins by defining administrative reform, governance, and good governance. It then seeks to explain the objectives of administrative reform, indicators of good governance, and parameters of good governance. It also briefly evaluates the historical evolution of good governance and administrative reform.

Chapter Three discusses the political-administrative landscape of Afghanistan in the post-Taliban era. The chapter is divided into two sections, beginning with an introduction. The following section highlights the events of 9/11 and briefly describes the country's profile. Finally, the present thesis examines the administrative and political system in the post-Taliban government with particular reference to National Unity Government (NUG) from 2014 to 2019.

Chapter Four presents recent administrative reforms in the post-government: trends and developments. This chapter divides into five parts. The first part begins with a brief historical overview of administrative reform efforts before the Taliban regime. Then the second section showcases the status of administrative reform in the post- Taliban Government. The third will focus on the administrative reform initiatives instituted by the Afghan National Unity Government from 2014 to 2019. Finally, the fourth chapter assesses Afghanistan's public administration's weaknesses and limitations, focusing on decentralization, organizational restructuring, human capital, and simplifying rules and regulations during Afghanistan's National Unity Government (ANUG).

Chapter Five presents administrative reform failures and success stories in the post-Taliban government. The chapter examines the significant factors that hampered administrative reform efforts in the post-Taliban government.

Chapter Six examines the status of good governance in the post-Taliban government. The chapter is organized into two sections. The first section presents the chapter's general overview of governance and good governance in Afghanistan. The second section identifies and analyses the challenges of good governance practices in the post-Taliban government.

Chapter Seven provides the conclusion to the thesis. The chapter is structured into six sections. The first section presents the chapter introduction, followed by a section that reflects on the methodology adopted for the thesis. The subsequent two sections summarize the main findings and the research contribution to knowledge. The next part presents the study's limitations. Finally, research limitations were highlighted while recommendations were made for future research as well as decision-makers and implementer of changes, including the government of Afghanistan.